

REMARKS

At the time the present Final Office Action was mailed (July 28, 2005), claims 1-39 and 52 were pending, with claims 16, 19, 32, 33, and 35 withdrawn. Claims 1 and 22 have been amended, and claims 2, 25, and 37-39 have been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-24, 26-36, and 52 are currently pending.

In the July 28, 2005, Office Action, all the claims were either allowed, rejected, or objected to. More specifically, the status of the application in light of the final Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1, 3-8, 14, 21-24, 28, and 37-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,678,143 to Griffin ("Griffin");

(B) Claims 2, 9-13, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 25-27 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form; and

(C) Claims 29-31, 34, 36, and 52 were indicated to be allowed.

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on November 2, 2005. During the telephone interview, the pending claims and the Griffin reference were discussed, as were possible claim amendments. In light of the finality of the present Office Action, the discussed claim amendments have not been applied to the pending claims, but applicants reserve the right to provide such amendments in a continuation or other application.

A. Response to the Section 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 3-8, 14, 21-24, 28, and 37-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Griffin. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 2, which was indicated to be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form.

Accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn. Claims 3-8, 14, and 21 depend from claim 1. Accordingly, the Section 102 rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons, and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Claim 22 has been amended to include the elements of claim 25, which was indicated to be allowable if rewritten to be in independent form. Accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of claim 22 should be withdrawn. Claims 23, 24, and 28 depend from claim 22, and accordingly, the Section 102 rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Claims 37-39 have been cancelled without commenting on or conceding the merits of the Examiner's position with regard to these claims, and without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a continuation or other application. Accordingly, the Section 102 rejections of these claims are now moot.

B. Response to the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 2 has been cancelled and the elements of this claim have been incorporated into claim 1, as discussed above. Accordingly, the objection to claim 2 is now moot. Claims 9-13, 15, 17, 18, and 20 all depend from claim 1, which as discussed above, is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the objections to these claims should be withdrawn.

Claim 25 has been cancelled and the elements of this claim have been incorporated into claim 22, as discussed above. Accordingly, the objection to claim 25 is now moot. Claims 26 and 27 depend from claim 22, which as indicated above, is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the objections to claims 26 and 27 should be withdrawn.

C. Response to the Indication of Allowable Claims

Claims 29-31, 34, 36, and 52 were indicated to be allowed. These claims have not been amended.

D. Request for Consideration of Withdrawn Claims

Claims 16, 19, 32, 33, and 35, which were previously withdrawn, now depend from allowable independent claims. Accordingly, applicants expressly request consideration and allowance of these dependent claims.

E. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner notices any informalities in the application, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone.

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

By


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